

What is claimed is:

1. A method for comparing suppliers, the method comprising the steps of:

sending survey questions for receipt by supplier computer systems;

5 sending programming instructions for receipt and execution by the supplier computer systems, the instructions being for causing the supplier computer systems to return supplier survey answers to a server, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as data elements included in responding documents;

parsing the data elements from the responding documents; and

evaluating the data elements.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the certain format for the responding documents has answers identifiable as strings of text surrounded by text markups, wherein the text markups include tags describing the data elements.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the categories include development process, quality,  
20 enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of evaluating the data elements comprises:  
comparing the data elements to corresponding evaluator requirements.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

5 receiving survey inputs from an evaluator, wherein the evaluator inputs define the  
evaluator requirements.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

sending survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;

10 sending programming instructions for receipt and execution by the evaluator's computer  
system, the instructions being for causing the evaluator's computer system to return evaluator  
survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator answers are included in one or more evaluator  
responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or  
more evaluator responding documents.

8. A computer program product for comparing suppliers, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for sending survey questions for receipt by supplier computer systems;

second instructions for receipt and execution by the supplier computer systems, the

5 execution of the second instructions causing the supplier computer systems to return supplier survey answers to a server, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as data elements included in responding documents;

third instructions for parsing the data elements from the responding documents; and

fourth instructions for evaluating the data elements.

9. The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the certain format for the responding documents has answers identifiable as strings of text surrounded by text markups, wherein the text markups include tags describing the data elements.

10. The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

11. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the categories include development process, quality, enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

12. The of computer program product of claim 8, wherein the instructions for evaluating the data elements comprise instructions for comparing the data elements to corresponding evaluator requirements.

13. The computer program product of claim 12, comprising fifth instructions for receiving survey inputs from an evaluator, wherein the evaluator inputs define the evaluator requirements.

5

14. The computer program product of claim 13, comprising:

sixth instructions for sending survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;

seventh instructions for receipt and execution by the evaluator's computer system,

10 execution of the seventh instructions by the evaluator's computer system causing the evaluator's computer system to return evaluator survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator answers are included in one or more evaluator responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or more evaluator responding documents.

15. A system for comparing suppliers, the system comprising:

a processor for connecting to a network; and

a storage device coupled to the processor, wherein the storage device is for storing:

survey questions;

5 first instructions operable with the processor for sending the survey questions to supplier computer systems;

second instructions operable with the processor for sending to supplier computer systems, the second instructions being for causing the supplier computer systems to return supplier survey answers to the system, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as data elements included in responding documents;

third instructions operable with the processor for parsing the data elements from the responding documents; and

fourth instructions operable with the processor for evaluating the data elements.

10  
15 16. The system of claim 15, wherein the certain format for the responding documents has answers identifiable as strings of text surrounded by text markups, wherein the text markups include tags describing the data elements.

20 17. The system of claim 15, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the categories include development process, quality, enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein the storage device is for storing:

fifth instructions operable with the processor for comparing the data elements to corresponding evaluator requirements.

5

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the storage device is for storing:

sixth instructions operable with the processor for receiving survey inputs from an evaluator, wherein the evaluator inputs define the evaluator requirements.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the storage device is for storing:

seventh instructions operable with the processor for sending survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;

eighth instructions operable with the processor for sending programming instructions for receipt and execution by the evaluator's computer system, the eighth instructions being for causing the evaluator's computer system to return evaluator survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator answers are included in one or more evaluator responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or more evaluator responding documents.

10  
15  
20  
25  
30  
35  
40  
45  
50  
55  
60  
65  
70  
75  
80  
85  
90  
95  
100  
105  
110  
115  
120  
125  
130  
135  
140  
145  
150  
155  
160  
165  
170  
175  
180  
185  
190  
195  
200  
205  
210  
215  
220  
225  
230  
235  
240  
245  
250  
255  
260  
265  
270  
275  
280  
285  
290  
295  
300  
305  
310  
315  
320  
325  
330  
335  
340  
345  
350  
355  
360  
365  
370  
375  
380  
385  
390  
395  
400  
405  
410  
415  
420  
425  
430  
435  
440  
445  
450  
455  
460  
465  
470  
475  
480  
485  
490  
495  
500